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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001561

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: PAPUA -- MORE LOW-LEVEL VIOLENCE

REF: JAKARTA 1400 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: There has been more violence in Indonesia's Papua region. An unidentified armed group opened fire on September 12 in southern Papua, injuring two Indonesian employees of U.S. mining giant Freeport-McMoRan. GOI authorities are investigating the incident which comes against the backdrop of a chain of shootings in recent weeks. Papuan separatists are chief suspects. Freeport-McMoRan operations have not been seriously effected. As law enforcement operations move forward, Mission continues to urge the GOI to increase its politically-directed efforts and implement autonomy provisions in the volatile region. END SUMMARY.

ANOTHER SHOOTING IN PAPUA

¶2. (U) Trouble continues to flare up in the Papua region of eastern Indonesia. The latest incident took place on September 12 when an armed group fired on a Freeport-McMoRan bus carrying security and cleaning personnel, wounding two Indonesian Freeport security guards with one sustaining a severe head wound. The incident occurred near the base of operations for U.S. mining giant Freeport-McMoRan in the Timika region of Papua Province.

¶3. (U) Shootings also continue to plague police and military forces despite an increase in their numbers, which now total an estimated 1,400 personnel in the area. In a separate incident on September 9 one day after an additional 600 TNI personnel arrived to assist in efforts to protect the mine, unidentified armed individuals opened fire from the surrounding jungle on a military vehicle. No one was injured and the assailants escaped into the jungle.

¶4. (C) No one has been arrested for the most recent attacks. Papuan separatists are blamed for the incidents, though some observers say criminal gangs may be involved. While a tiny, unarmed group, separatists are known to operate in the deep jungles of Papua. (Note: Indonesian authorities reportedly recently arrested Jonah Wenda, a Papuan activist who is said to have separatist connections. It is not clear what if anything Wenda might be charged with by the GOI.)

FREEPORT OPERATIONS MOVE FORWARD

¶5. (C) Despite the shootings, U.S. firm Freeport-McMoRan's operations are moving forward at this time. Freeport-McMoRan's Copper and Gold mine holds the world's largest reserves of gold and a copper reserve of an estimated 93 billion pounds. The operations are a key contributor to

the budget of the Indonesian government. While Freeport operations are not impacted, there is a swelling of concern re the developing situation. The All-Indonesian Workers Union, a key union at the facility, submitted a request to the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) requesting that the NCHR "guarantee" the safety of the 21,000 miners employed by Freeport. In the meantime, Freeport continues to maintain heightened security precautions and has severely restricted travel on the key road that has been the scene of most of the attacks.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

¶6. (C) Papua has been tense for some time. The current series of shootings began on July 11 and have left three people dead--including one Freeport Australian employee--and several others injured (see reftels). On August 16, unidentified assailants fired on Freeport-McMoran vehicles. No one was injured in that attack. On August 22, unidentified assailants shot at a convoy of Freeport vehicles traveling from Timika to the mine and five Freeport employees, all Indonesian nationals, were injured. There have been a handful of arrests in these incidents.

GUIDING THE GOI

¶7. (C) Indonesia has reacted to the security situation by reinforcing its forces in the region and conducting limited operations to catch the perpetrators. In the meantime, it is proceeding cautiously and we have not heard of complaints from Papuans about any sort of problems with Indonesian law enforcement. On the political side, Mission continues to

JAKARTA 00001561 002 OF 002

urge the GOI to increase its efforts to implement autonomy provisions in the volatile region. While the vast majority is not swayed by the extremist rhetoric of the small group of separatists, many Papuans remain ambivalent toward the GOI, wishing that Jakarta would do more to develop the region (one of the poorest in Indonesia) and to support its developing self-government structures. Realizing that more must be done, President Yudhoyono has promised to focus more on Papua during his second term.
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